

REMARKS

The above amendments to the above-captioned application along with the following remarks are being submitted as a full and complete response to the Official Action dated February 26, 2003. In view of the above amendments and the following remarks, the Examiner is respectfully requested to give due reconsideration to this application, to indicate the allowability of the claims, and to pass this case to issue.

Status of the Claims

Claims 1, 3-8, 21-22, 35 and 41-44 are under consideration in this application. Claims 2, 9-20, 26-34 and 36-40 are being cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer. Claims 1, 3-8, 21-22 are being amended, as set forth above, in order to more particularly define and distinctly claim Applicants' invention. New claims 41-44 are being added to recite other embodiments described in the specification.

Additional Amendments

The claims are being amended to correct formal errors and/or to better disclose or describe the features of the present invention as claimed. Applicants hereby submit that no new matter is being introduced into the application through the submission of this response.

Formality Rejections

Claims 1-18, 20-34 and 36-40 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite. As indicated, the claims have been amended as required by the Examiner. Accordingly, the withdrawal of the outstanding informality rejection is in order, and is therefore respectfully solicited.

Allowable Subject Matters

Claim 35 was allowed. Since claims 1-18, 20-34 and 36-40 were only rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112 but not § 102 or § 103 rejections, Applicants assume that the above-mentioned claims will be in condition for allowance after overcoming the § 112 rejections.

Prior Art Rejections

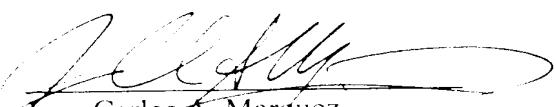
Claim 19 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(a) as being anticipated by Singh et al. (6,042,687). As mentioned, claim 19 is being cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer. The rejection thus becomes moot.

In view of all the above, clear and distinct differences as discussed exist between the present invention as now claimed and the prior art reference upon which the rejections in the Office Action rely. Applicants respectfully contend that the prior art references cannot anticipate the present invention or render the present invention obvious. Rather, the present invention as a whole is distinguishable, and thereby allowable over the prior art.

Favorable reconsideration of this application is respectfully solicited. Should there be any outstanding issues requiring discussion that would further the prosecution and allowance of the above-captioned application, the Examiner is invited to contact the Applicants' undersigned representative at the address and phone number indicated below.

Respectfully submitted,

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